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LETTERS

ON THE SUBJECT OF

THE EARL OF SELKIRK'S

PAMPHLET

ON

*HIGHLAND EMIGRATION:*

AS THEY LATELY APPEARED UNDER THE SIGNATURE OF  
*AMICUS* IN ONE OF THE EDINBURGH NEWSPAPERS.

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EDINBURGH:

PRINTED FOR JOHN ANDERSON;  
AND LONGMAN, HURST, REES, AND ORME, LONDON.

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## ADVERTISEMENT.

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THESE letters appeared in eight late numbers of the Edinburgh Herald and Chronicle. They do not seem to have been intended ever to have been published in any other shape. But as they contain a chain of suggestions on a subject of great interest and vast national importance; and as they are written in a style which cannot be offensive even to those who may differ in opinion from the Author, the Publisher has ventured to present them to the Public, in a more connected form, in the hopes that they will either excite the labours of others in the same path, or that perusal and reconsideration may induce their Author to pursue his investigations on the subject of Highland Emigration, at greater length than heretofore.

*EDIN. Feb. 26. 1806.*

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# HIGHLAND EMIGRATION.

## LETTER I.

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*TO THE EDITOR OF THE HERALD & CHRONICLE.*

SIR,

HAVING within these few days perused a pamphlet, which the Earl of Selkirk has lately published, on the subject of emigration, and to which my curiosity was excited, partly by its extensive popularity, and partly by that splendid encomium which an article in a noted periodical work exhibits, I have found so much disappointment in the result of a careful perusal of the book, and, amidst many things to commend, have seen so much to disapprove, that I am disposed, with your permission, to submit the opinion of an individual, on some parts of this celebrated

ed pamphlet, to the consideration of your readers in general.

In so doing I should wish not to be misunderstood. I have no personal object to serve. I have no Highland tenantry to lose ; no property dependant either on the waste or increase of Highland population. I have no knowledge of Lord Selkirk, but the general report of the goodness of his heart, and no impressions of his intelligence, but the conviction that it is considerable. But I suspect that, with all this soundness of heart, and all this extent of talent, his late work is little else than the fruit of an inconsiderate and juvenile enthusiasm, grounded on certain mistaken principles, and fraught with very dangerous consequences.

That his Lordship's book is popular, is no ways surprising. The eloquence of its diction, the modesty of its execution, the interesting tendency of its subject, the enthusiasm which it both breathes and inspires, the active zeal of so elevated and so young a man, the almost romantic story of the settlement of his infant colony, are all calculated to excite lively emotions of admiration.—At a time when the struggles of the Empire to advance her own greatness, and to curb the criminal ambition of another power, demands the patriotism of every class ; in an age when those demands do, nevertheless, not always find a sympathetic

sympathetic obedience from the younger men of the higher ranks ; in such times, to discover such talents, and such activity, in such a man as Lord Selkirk, naturally draws forth neither very ordinary, nor very limited applause.

Nor is it wonderful that professional reviewers should join in this applause. With them, popularity is the prime motive both of opinion and of conduct. To suit the public taste is their great and obvious object, not only in the selection of the books they characterise, but in the tenor of their individual reports. In the present instance, besides, it is more than suspected, that the author of the warmest panegyric which the reviews have furnished, was an early and zealous friend of the Earl's, whose attachment to the man may have overmatched the justice of the critic, and whose predisposition for opinions may have led him somewhat hastily to presume the rectitude of their application.

To the writer of this letter, the praises which have been so profusely lavished on the pamphlet of this Noble Lord, appear to be matter of some regret. So long as the peasantry of any country is essential to its well-being, so long as this island has within its bounds one unproductive acre capable of improvement, as long must any book, of which the tendency goes to  
repress



represents the exertions either of Government or of individuals to restrain emigration, occasion public danger. It were a doctrine too wild for the warmest admirer of the Noble Earl to maintain that the prosperity of a country is only in proportion to its *want* of population; it were a position too adventurous for all his admirers together, to insist that Scotland has arrived at that consummation of improvement which supercedes the necessity of future exertions. And yet the tendency of the Noble Earl's observations,—and, what may perhaps be sooner obvious to mankind in general—the tendency of his example, strikes some individuals as directly calculated for the recommendation of a system, of all others in theory the most wild, and in practice the most mischievous.

The great and leading outset doctrines of the Noble Lord are (perhaps unhappily) founded in indisputable truths. The primary foundation of his argument is, in some measure, incontrovertible; and to men who do not think very deeply on any subject; to those who are caught by the music and the tinsel of diction; to those who yield to the simplicity of a plausible deduction, or the fascination of merely present good intentions; over and above the ample herd of those who believe any thing they see in a printed book, especially when ushered into notice by the sanction

tion of a great name; to all such men, the effects of a publication, such as Lord Selkirk's, must be conviction. No man who knows any thing of the state of society in the Highlands of Scotland, is ignorant of those leading facts which the Earl of Selkirk has, nevertheless, filled many a page to tell. Every Scotsman, and almost every educated Briton, is aware that the gradual abolition of the feudal system, and the measures consequent on the rebellions 1715 and 1745, changed the measures of the chieftains, and altered the manners of their people. By the determined introduction, and the vigorous execution of her laws, Government transferred the weapons of authority from individuals to the State. The decay of the desire soon followed the extirpation of the means, of Clanish hostility; and of consequence, the occasion for a warlike tenantry, died away with the outrageous opportunities and the ferocious dispositions of the landlords. Men who were retained, not to till the ground, but to fight the quarrels or increase the magnificence of their masters, were useless encumbrances to these masters, when the battle and parade were no more—men who had lost the spear, but who had not yet got the ploughshare in its place, became of necessity idle. It is always easier to disarm than to employ; to forbid one system than to intro-

duce another. The prohibitions which followed the victory of Culloden were therefore speedily enforced, but the revolution of feelings long acquired, and of dispositions inherited through a succession of ages, required patience, and a gradual advance. The landlords were, however, compelled to resign *their* power, and this at once destroyed the reciprocity of obligation with their people. For as the master lost his use for the vassal, so the vassal, of consequence, lost his claims for support from his chief.—A great body of men thus became apparently supernumerary, and, as it were, a drag on the hands of chieftains now unable, and perhaps unwilling, to attempt the conversion of a numerous band to habits foreign to their natures, difficult in the peculiar state of the country, and impossible without great expence. Hence at first arose that necessity, and those discontents which drove the Highlanders to look to other countries for those blessings, (as they conceived them), which the own land no longer gave; and hence that apathy with which their masters, for a time, permitted the superfluous tenantry to depart. The vanity of numbers was easily overcome by the profits of a temporary reduction, and even the love of power retired before the prospects of immediate emolument.

Lord

Lord Selkirk is right, therefore, when he observes, that a change of policy accompanied a change of manners; and that the operation of the two having thrown loose a great body of people, that body was necessitated to seek the employment abroad, of which they no longer saw the prospect at home.

Sir,—I shall, if your permit me, resume this subject in your next number.—I am, &c.

*AMICUS.*

## LETTER II.

*TO THE EDITOR OF THE HERALD AND CHRONICLE.*

SIR,

IN my last I observed that Lord Selkirk was correct in so far as he remarked, that, when a numerous body of men were turned adrift by a revolution, both in manners and policy, these men were naturally obliged to seek that protection abroad, of which they were for the time deprived at home. A train of bold and hungry followers, no longer suffered by law to fight

Lord

fight for their bread, not yet enabled, in the condition of their country, to procure that bread by other means, and incapable, from their nature, to subsist without it, must be employed elsewhere. The new system came upon this people very unprepared for its reception, and but little disposed to make the experiment. Besides,—transformed into corn farmers at once, they could not be; they wanted skill; they wanted capital; they wanted a country adapted to the necessities of an immediate and expensive change. Converted into sheep farmers, they could as little be; for in addition to the other objections, their numbers presented an insurmountable bar to that plan. Still, however, many of them struggled for a while to resist the innovation; in some instances preferring mistaken claims of right; in others, appealing to prejudices not yet quite subdued, and to feelings which even a change of education could not at once totally obliterate. But the struggle of erroneous possession is ever vain; the combat of feeling against profit is generally fruitless. The majority of the people soon found they could be spared; and the doom of the Highland revolution, 1745, was now indeed heard and felt by the inhabitants. It is true, the operation of this awful sentence did not take place to its full extent in a moment;

moment ; but it commenced, and it has been in progress ever since.

In all this radical detail I agree with the Earl of Selkirk. In all this, I should suppose that neither his Lordship nor myself can find an opponent ; for the facts are of universal admission and notoriety. But farther I cannot accord with his Lordship. I acknowledge that the overthrow of feudal manners produced, on the pressure of the instant, a superabundant local population, and that such superabundance, not being directed into new channels of *domestic* uses, were of necessity driven to seek the means of existence elsewhere ; but I can hardly admit the justice of any one other position in Lord Selkirk's book. Indeed, Sir, I must unequivocally oppose the remainder of this book, in respect of its general tendency, and also in respect of the particular grounds by which that tendency is manifested. Of the first, I complain, because it is calculated not merely to extenuate, but to encourage emigration. With the latter, I am dissatisfied, because I suspect their accuracy. But were the materials unobjectionable, I cannot, as a friend to the country which contains me, but condemn a work of which the scope of ten out of twelve chapters is directly calculated to remove those apprehensions, which either the most discontented or the most sanguine

Highlander,

Highlander, must entertain (but for such assurances) against so vast an adventure as emigration. Domestic dissatisfaction is a cheerless and dangerous sentiment; and yet, can there be a keener edge laid to the root of domestic peace, than those glowing pictures of independence, security, congenial society, and every blessing a Highlander has been taught to prize, which the Earl of Selkirk has penciled under the term *Emigration*. Does he not turn to the peasant and say, "Leave your country; leave a land which has no longer use for you; a land where you may have bread indeed, but where you can only earn that bread by the direliction of every habit which could sweeten the morsel. Emigrate therefore; and if you will but turn towards the colony which I protect, and clear a few acres of its forests, you will become affluent and happy beyond the condition of all your fathers." And does he not look towards the Legislature and plead—"Encourage emigration—drain off your superfluous people—depopulate your mountains, and send your hardiest sons to foreign climes, there to seek that happiness and protection which the land of their fathers denied them; there to become the sure and steady friends of the country which turned them from her bosom."—Such, I contend, is the true import of the Noble Earl's advice; and if the particulars of its

detail

detail are embellished with the persuasives both of precept and example, still the object of all this is nothing else than to render his favourite emigration more palatable to the people, and less odious to the government.

In this spirit of well meant, but to my mind mistaken enthusiasm, I see nothing to commend. As we are a nation, in these precarious times, of soldiers—as we are a nation, at all times, of mariners—as we are also an agricultural and a mercantile people—in all these characters, is it possible to deny the importance of an abundant population? I would not, in the present condition of Europe, speak the language of despondency; but, as a lover of my country, I cannot but advise the champions of emigration to look well to the ranks of our armies, and the demands of our navy; to regard the state of wages of domestic labour, and the calls of our manufacturers, mechanics, and farmers, before they proceed farther in their experimental schemes of depopulation; I would have them regard the thousands of waste acres in our own land before they thus struggle to drain the scanty population it possesses; and I would earnestly remind them that, until the days of Lord Selkirk, the doctrine of most philosophers was, that the life's blood of this nation



nation was her inhabitants—her peasantry—nay, Sir, I will add (without meaning offence to any class of subjects) her Highlanders. William Pitt's illustrious father told the nation, and the nation's representatives, that he "fought for merit, and he found it in the mountains of the north;" and an author, at whom though it is the fashion of modern reviewers sometimes to sneer, still whose fame will not perish while the affections of the heart, and the love of morals endure, in rebuking the supineness, as well as the errors which thirty years ago prevailed on the subject of emigration, observes, that "to hinder insurrection by driving away the people, and to govern peaceably by having no subjects, argues no great profundity of politics. To soften the obdurate, to convince the mistaken, to mollify the resentful, are worthy of a statesman; but it affords a legislator little self-applause to consider that where there was formerly an insurrection, there is now a desert."\*

Sir, perhaps it may be said, that Lord Selkirk's book does not recommend to drain the country of its people; that he only seeks to conduct those who are pre-resolved to travel, into an asylum good for themselves, and beneficial to their native country; but a fair examination of his Lordship's pamphlet, of which

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\* Vide Johnson's Tour.

I shall offer something more in my next, will, I believe, correct the impression.

*AMICUS.*

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### LETTER III.

*TO THE EDITOR OF THE HERALD AND CHRONICLE.*

SIR,

I HAVE asserted, that a fair examination of Lord Selkirk's pamphlet will demonstrate the mistake of supposing that his arguments are confined to those individuals whose peculiar tempers or views would have led them to migrate at all events. His Lordship's 3d section, which is the basis of all his reasonings, (historical facts excepted) begins with representing the soil and climate—nature herself—as opposed “to the extension of Highland tillage;” that is to say, as in opposition to the very possibility of employing the people at home in those labours, which the Noble Lord is at great pains, in other places, to

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shew, are best adapted to a Highlander's feelings and nature. This, as an abstract and fundamental proposition, I deny. Granting that the mountains, properly so termed, are chiefly fitted for pasturage, we know that there are still uncultivated tracts, both vast and numerous, of which the soil is equal to every ordinary agricultural purpose; and as to the climate of these regions, though moist in some places, it is altogether erroneous to suppose it inferior to a great portion of the cultivated districts of Scotland. Whoever will go to the Highlands, unprejudiced by *opinions previously formed, and indisposed to reject all information which does not harmonize with those opinions*, will find, that wherever the improved system of husbandry has been even partially introduced, there has been found no impossibility of improvement, no superabundance of people, no love of emigration, and no want of good land to cultivate. Sir, I am well assured of these facts; and if any man doubts them, let him first impartially inquire, and then determine between Lord Selkirk and me. With such information, I cannot acknowledge that the Highlander is driven across the Atlantic by a defective soil, or a disastrous climate. Indeed, the Noble Lord has himself been aware of the inadequacy of these causes of emigration, and, accordingly, he studiously couples  
 them

them with two other supposed barriers to Highland prosperity, the scarcity of fuel, and the characteristic indolence of the people. In these last sources of Caledonian misery, the author is much about as unfortunate as in their antecedents. Even in the eye of manufacturing industry, the scarcity of fuel in these districts presents no real obstacle; and the supposed difficulties from national character are surmounted, almost as soon as they are created, by the Earl himself. That the Highlander may not have a coal-pit open at his cottage door, is true; but has he not a navigable sea all around him, and did Lord Selkirk never hear of imported fuel? How many of the European manufactories are served with sea-borne coal; nay, how many of the busiest and wealthiest towns in Scotland (*all*, I believe, to the north of Dundee) are thus accommodated, and yet thrive?—The scarcity of fuel, therefore, without placing any dependence on the almost universal facility of obtaining peat, would seem to be an affected and factitious objection against the introduction of a commercial and mechanical industry in the Highlands of Scotland.

But to this it has been superadded, that the temper of the people is adverse to exertion, at least at home. Now, Sir, let us consider but for a moment;—the man who has not been taught to work, and the man to whom  
employment

employment has never been furnished, must be ostensibly indolent. The spirit of industry must be ever dormant, until it is awakened by the opportunity of exertion; and thus the Highlander, while bereft of the means of employment, must appear as idle, as a Lowlander would appear in similar circumstances: yet such is not his native genius. Thousands of testimonies prove this. At this moment, I know that public works are carrying on in different counties by natives of Inverness and Ross-shire, who are employed for the very reason, that they are better labourers than the people of these counties.—View them also as soldiers and as seamen, and then decry their capabilities if you can. It is needless, however, to pursue this inquiry, for I can produce the evidence of the Noble Lord against himself. He has told you, that the Highlander, inactive and indolent on his own shore, is no sooner transplanted to his Lordship's colony, than he becomes active and energetic, an industrious husbandman, and a promising warrior. The constitution of the man undergoes, it seems, a total revolution by the mere act of emigration, and the very hereditary vices of his nature are, by this single step, transformed into their opposite virtues.

The inconsistency of these statements is manifest and striking. It can only be the result of an enthusiasm,

siasm, which is just the more dangerous in proportion to the general liberality and excellence of the mind on which it has fastened itself. Sir, I should lament to hear it argued, even in the sportive display of controversial skill, that the stifled and feverish air of an American fen was requisite for the preservation of that spirit which once dignified the sons of Morven. Far more must I lament to find it seriously upheld, and by so elevated an adviser, that the heroism of character, which once distinguished our countrymen, has fallen so low, that to preserve the Highland name from utter contemptibility, we must transplant her people to a distant—an American clime. Happily for our country, we believe the opinion to be erroneous; and not less happily, we are persuaded that in general the remedy will be esteemed as much worse than the disease. If the temper and character of the Highland peasantry has indeed degenerated, it is trusted that the general disposition will turn towards the trial of a domestic cure. At this crisis, when men, in numbers beyond example, are wanted to defend our island from the attacks of a man who would have no objection to annex even the Highlands of Scotland, with all their imperfections “of soil and climate,” to his own overgrown possessions, we can scarcely resolve which most to condemn, the enthusiasm which would invite, or the

the argument that would exculpate an active spirit of British emigration.

On these grounds, I beg leave to resist Lord Selkirk's whole positions rested on the ideas of soil, and climate, and national character. They are suspicious in accuracy, and are dangerous in experiment. Neither can I yeild to the wild and unaccountable notion, that banishment from our native land, and all the scenes of infancy, is in any way caculated to call forth the hidden virtues of the human character. One word more on this head only.

The Noble Earl has argued, that any change of scene to a Highlander, is emigration; that to remove him across the Clyde is tantamount to removal across the Western Ocean; that Glasgow and Paisley are to him as foreign as the shores of Labrador, or St John's; that to be happy, he must have land; and that to have land, he must be an emigrant. On the justice of some of these opinions, I shall probably hereafter remark; at present, I would only request of Lord Selkirk and his admirers, generally to ask themselves these questions;—Granting that the Highland climate is boisterous, Is it not at least nearer to that of "Glasgow and Paisley," than the climate of the Back Settlements of North America; admitting that the manners of Lanark or Renfrew may at first surprise a native

tive of Argyle or Inverness, are those manners more difficult for a Scotchman to imbibe, than the customs which pervade the banks of the Mississippi or the Oronooko; above all, granting that change of place of any kind is emigration, which of the two is the better for the Patriot to recommend, that movement from county to county, whereby the Nation loses not one man; or the passage from clime to clime, which, in all human probability, separates the subject from the parent State for ever?

AMICUS.

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## LETTER IV.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE HERALD AND CHRONICLE.

SIR,

IT is a prominent feature in Lord Selkirk's book, the consideration and state of that valuable supply of *soldiers* which his Lordship owns that the public, for a long while, derived from the Highlands, but which



as he conceives, is now at an end. Satisfied that this is "one of the chief political evils of emigration," it is singular that the Noble Lord should ever have propagated a single opinion, far less should have adopted a course of measures, which were susceptible of a construction favourable to so fatal a spirit. Fortunately, however, neither his arguments nor his example have yet extinguished this nursery of national protectors. I am credibly informed, that since the bill which the Legislature lately and wisely passed, at the instigation of the Highland Society, nearly four thousand Highlanders have entered into the army; and as one remarkable instance of the existing spirit of these people, and of the still existing nursery which their country contains, it may be mentioned, that Colonel Cameron of the 79th regiment, lately raised 800 men in six months, for his second battalion, without himself possessing one single foot of Highland territory. This success could not be the effect of those "low rents, and that feudal influence," to which alone Lord Selkirk would ascribe such things; the days of *these* operating causes have nearly passed away. And let us only contrast the fact I have mentioned, with another fact which Lord Selkirk cannot but know; his own success in the recruiting for emigrants. He too, raised about 800 people; but his  
troops

troops were composed of a motley assemblage of ages and sexes. Even these, I am informed, he raised with infinite labour and difficulty ; travelling from market to market, supporting hired recruiters, aided by eloquent harangues, and holding out splendid promises, and enchanting prospects. Won by these means, about 800 people were enticed to visit an expected land of ease and plenty, and to desert the scenes of their youth. The Highlander is not naturally credulous ; but amidst a whole mass of people, there always will be some who are not proof against golden dreams, nor such temptations as the Earl of Selkirk's personal attendance in the journey in pursuit of promised affluence. Yet, with all these allurements, his Lordship's recruiting came but slowly on, while every common regimental serjeant surrounded him, with no other seduction but "*King and Country*," out-did the eloquence, and overpowered the largesses of the Earl and all his supporters.

Sir, I have perfect assurances that this is the fact, and I have pride in announcing it to my country. Still then I must maintain, that the Scottish Highlands are yet a nursery for soldiers, and will continue so, unless the friends of colonization should ever unhappily succeed in desolating its shores. The men who fought our battles in Egypt, in the 42d, 91st, and 92d regiments, were Highlanders ; raised long after feudal

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influence

fluence was in its wane. The men who vanquished Tippoo, who followed General Baird to the breach at Seringapatam, were mostly persons of the same description; and many of our best filled regiments at this moment, who possibly may soon be called to fight our battles on our own ground, are those very Highlanders, whose brethren it has cost Lord Selkirk so many pounds, and so much trouble, to send off to fell wood, and drain swamps in Prince Edward's Island.

It has been observed by the Noble Earl, that in proportion as the feudal system has been supplanted by commerce, the Highland regiments have "approached" to a similitude with others in the service. Depend upon it, Sir, no officer will say so. If, indeed, the Earl only means to state, that in those regiments where the native Highlanders are mixed with Lowland recruits, there, the especial character of the former will be less conspicuous *in the corps*, than in regiments purely Highland, the assertion is very safe. But if it is meant to be conveyed, that in the regiments wholly Highland-born, the characteristic features of their birth have changed, then do I deny the statement, and put the fact to the judgment and experience of every officer in the service.

Be assured, Sir, that the precise Highland character of many regiments, will be found as distinctly marked in 1806, as it was in 1756. The causes are

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not justly to be sought in the progress and increase of commerce ; they are to be found in the climate, in the constitution, and in blood.—It is a total mistake to suppose, that commercial prosperity destroys the heroism of national character. The history of the world, and the uniform conduct of our own Lowland, English, and Irish troops, refutes the idea. To discover the source of the peculiar gallantry and hardihood of the Highland corps, you must turn to the country which produced them—to its mountains and its rugged shores. In these natural causes, conjoined with the effects of a free government, you will find the true and the still existing means of preserving that nursery for your soldiers, which I am apprehensive the forest lands of North America are little calculated to improve.

The Noble Lord desires his readers to look back to the Seven Years War, in order to view Highland regiments in their purity. This, Sir, in one sense, is but a paltry compliment to their successors. I suspect, however, that the Earl here alludes to one thing, and the generality of his readers look to another ; that it is not the character of the foldier, but the mode of recruiting him, to which his Lordship refers. If this suspicion is accurate, the difficulty is unriddled at once. We are as far from maintaining, that the landlords, in general, have now the same influence which

which they possessed fifty years ago, in directing their people to follow them, as we are from admitting, that the constitutional powers of the foldier have declined with the aristocracy of the Chieftain.

The importance of a Highland peasantry, as a nursery for foldiers, and for mariners, too, is not denied by the Noble Earl himself. Unless, therefore, it could be proved, that the country, at this moment, has a superfluity of both descriptions of men, I should imagine that there would be more genuine patriotism in conducting the unemployed population of the Highlands (if such there be) to the immediate service of the State, than to transatlantic speculations. It is said, however, that the emigrant is not the description of person who would enlist. We reply, Try them. We believe indeed, that the trial has been frequently made, and successfully made, on the very eve of embarkation. Take but half the pains, and less than half the sums which Lord Selkirk has expended in teaching the advantages of his American establishment, to instruct the Highlander that his country wants himself, and will protect his family, and depend on it you will keep him. Some restless and dissatisfied spirits will no doubt always form an exception to general conduct. But of these I speak not. At all events, why not make the attempt? Is money and labour only rationally employed

ed in the service of emigration? Ships you may build,  
and temples you may restore ; but

“ A bold peasantry, their country’s pride,

“ When once destroy’d, can never be supplied.

Emigration, says Lord Selkirk, is, at any rate, connected with “ national prosperity,” in respect both to agriculture and manufactures ; and this position he raises on the history of our sister kingdom, during the æra of the House of Tudor. That during the reigns of Henry the Seventh, and his successor, the power of the greater English Barons was broken ; that in consequence, their retainers were set loose upon the instant, and obliged to move ; and that, historically speaking, England has been a flourishing country ever since, I am no ways disposed to contradict. But it does not follow, that the emigration of those days was the cause of the subsequent prosperity of the nation. This emigration was the *effect* of a sudden revolution, and not the cause of any internal national advantage. It is incorrect to confound the partial result of a peculiar and temporary innovation, with the establishment of a general principle of political economy ; which principle, if it existed at all, must go to this

enormous

enormous length, that national prosperity is ever in proportion to the extension and activity of the spirit of emigration. I am, &c. *AMICUS.*

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## LETTER V.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE HERALD AND CHRONICLE.

SIR,

IN recommending emigration as advantageous to manufactures and agriculture, Lord Selkirk begins with assuring us that those who emigrate are not of the description of "industrious workmen." Granted: *They* are no more to be reckoned industrious workmen, who have not been instructed, and are not employed, than they are to be esteemed American farmers who have never crossed the ocean. But the question ought to be, are these men incapable of being made industrious workmen? For resolving that point the Noble Earl, as usual, himself aids us. He freely admits

admits that they are capable of all the adequate exertion how soon they are removed from their native homes ; and surely it is an undeniable and necessary confluence of this admission that the same fitness would appear at home, were the opportunity of its exercise only presented. In fact it is the cultivation of the earth, we are assured, that is the great bent of their natures and inclinations ; and of course, unless they are born to be fit for nothing, in any situation, they must be capable at home as well as abroad for all adequate exertions in this great tendency of their original and hereditary dispositions. Thus one difficulty is surmounted. It is true, there remains another ; for the capability of the labourer is useless, unless there are opportunities for its display. Availing himself of this proposition, the Noble Earl is anxious to represent the Highland districts as absolutely unfit for any purposes but those of pasturage. He would proscribe Highland cultivation as unprofitable to the subject, and as baneful to the state. Nay, Sir, he would even advise a diminution of that wretched portion of tillage land, which, in these regions, at present cheers the dismal expanse of otherways uninterrupted waste. With deference to his Lordship, this is a little too much. Those who know the Highlands much better than Lord Selkirk, can instruct him that within its bounds there is abundant capacity



capacity for the employment of all the population, and pasturage land enough besides. His notion of banishing agriculture entirely from the Highlands, and the parallel scheme of dismissing pasturage wholly from the plains of England, may be extremely ingenious in theory, but the visions of theory do not always accommodate the homely circumstances of vulgar practice. It may be beautiful in fancy to see the Highlander importing every ounce of his bread corn, and to view his southern neighbours driving every ox and every sheep to the pastures of Lochaber. But it is believed that a farmer would inform the Noble Lord, that though the relative proportions of arable and grafs land must doubtless vary in different places, still his convenience depends on the union, not on the separation of the two.

Dismissing, however, the idea of Highland improvement altogether, are we to forget that there is other land to cultivate in Britain, in districts less inaccessible than those which have fallen within the proscriptions of Lord Selkirk; land which at this moment lies waste, *only from the want of hands to till it?*—Or is it an answer to that objection to observe, that Government must not compel, “by restrictive laws,” men disposed to emigrate, to seek employment within the kingdom, because, in that even, the labour would be

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unwelcome, and the produce scanty?—Sir, we do not allude to compulsion. The labour which is forced is never kindly; it accords not with *our* island; it smells too rankly of America and her islands. We allude not to it. We recommend to Lord Selkirk, and others who have the power, to invite and court, not to drive, the unemployed Highlander. Even in distress and penury, he needs temptations to draw him abroad; and, if blandishments are to be given, why not tempt to domestic service, even though emigration should thereby sicken and decay, as for two years past it has been doing, through the beneficent measures of the Legislature, and the patriotic labours of the Highland Society? No man will require a greater bribe to travel to a nearer than to a more distant spot, especially when, in the latter case, he has not the *power to return*.—They only who have witnessed an emigrant departure can know how small an offer would change the destination of the travellers. Such of your readers as have chanced to peruse Mrs Grant's beautiful and just description of whole families wandering to the shore, while in pathetic strains they sung, "We return no more\*," may guess the affecting truth, and rest assured, that it is necessity, not choice, which actuates the emigrant.

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\* Poems by Mrs Grant of Laggan.

As to *manufactures*, the elegant and Noble Author has denied even the capabilities of the Highlander. He denies that he is fitted for any thing beyond the labour "of the porter or the barrowman." This again is a condemnation far too broad. It may be true that a Highlander grown to man's estate may be much about as unfit to begin the study of the nicer operations of mechanical labour, as the Noble Lord, after five and twenty years of literary pursuit, would probably be. But this does not indicate a natural disqualification for the ordinary purposes of manufacturing industry, if the education is begun sufficiently soon. Every manufacturing company in Scotland can prove my assertion; and as to the establishment of local manufactures among themselves, alas! Sir, it is not the failure, it is the *absence* of the experiment, which drives the poor Highlander from his home.

This allusion to the possibility of employing these wanderers in our own country, leads me to say a word or two more on the means which (independently of public works) have been proposed for the preservation of Highland population. It is truly surprising how lightly Lord Selkirk has treated these things. The same man, to whom remote colonization presents almost no difficulties, who can cheerfully embark to people the desert, to transform the wilderness, to  
overpower

overpower the strongest obstacles of nature, and the total want of arts, starts at the very mention of improvement in his own country. He rejects the whole class of measures which have been suggested for the preservation of our Highland brethren; he will not admit that the improvement of waste lands can answer; and, as already mentioned, he is not less hopeless of the plans of manufactures and the fisheries. Now, in regard to waste land, his Lordship's incredulity is passing strange; for he himself allows that the attempts hitherto made towards this object have been successful, and leave no doubt "that, by this means, a number of people may every where be retained." These are his words; and yet he argues against the plan, because of the general poverty of the people.

I answer, that if the people are poor, the public is powerful; and I repeat, that if aid is wanting, it is better to aid the man who remains than the man who leaves you; better to tempt the adherent than the fugitive. Few and simple are the Highlander's wants. He needs protection and instruction more than money. Find him these, and trust me, his industry in his native cottage will not be inferior to his activity in an American wigwam. The same observations apply both to agricultural and manufacturing improvements. In both, the difficulties rest much more in the

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the want of a little present means, and of skilful instruction, than in the obduracy of constitutional indolence, or the disadvantages of local circumstance.

Lord Selkirk, it is true, appears to think only of manufactures on the great scale—of an “accumulation of people”—of the necessity for a ready supply of all sorts of artists—of the accommodations of neighbouring markets, &c. Really, Sir, this is surprising; there is no end to objections, if one is resolved to find them. Were we proposing to plant a Manchester, or a Birmingham on the instant, all the requisites of multitudes, of ready-made mechanics, and of competing marts might be thought of. But raising our ideas not higher than towards Lochbroom or Ullapool, we must be permitted to reduce our necessities to the level of an infantine trade, and the employment of a people just emerging from barbarism.

Lastly, in regard to the fisheries; the Noble Lord has not been able to advance against this grand resource from the evils of Highland super-population, one argument, but the obstacle of the salt laws, and the incompatibility of connecting the profession of fishing, with the cultivation of land. Parliament at a breath can, and it is to be hoped will soon remove the one; for the *salt laws* are now known for certain to be prejudicial to the fisheries;—and experience will

will by and bye correct the other. A Highlander is not absolute proof against instruction and advice. If he were, Lord Selkirk must have found other tenants for his transatlantic estate. These people will listen to you, if you will teach them, as a friend.—Somewhat jealous at first, they certainly are; but if you once gain them, they are not fickle. All therefore that is wanted, is to convince them of the danger of uniting two inconsistent professions, and this last objection is at an end. Lord Selkirk, I understand, was just one day at Tobermory, and that a very bad one, inasmuch, that his Lordship was mostly confined to the house. It is said, indeed, that he passed a few days more in the *interior* of Mull, (at Quinish I think); but that visit could as little improve his Lordship's acquaintance with the condition of the fisheries on the coast, as a visit to Durham or Northallerton could enable another man to decide on the existing circumstances of the Newcastle coaleries. With this slender opportunity of information, he nevertheless stands forth to advocate the condemnation of a source of national wealth which, had his facts been unchallengeable, a Briton should have been slow to decry, and slower to counteract.

In truth, on this head, as on others, the candour of this Noble Lord has induced him to answer himself.

self. In the same Chapter, in which he denies that the fisheries afford an antidote to emigration, he owns that wherever the experiment has been fairly made, (as in the case of Mr Maclauchlan of Maclauchlan) *it has succeeded.*

AMICUS.

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## LETTER VI.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE HERALD & CHRONICLE.

SIR,

IT is one of Lord Selkirk's most favourite theories, that emigration "has no permanent effect on population." This fancy, however, is obviously self-contradictory in one sense, and its application is manifestly inexpedient in another. It is impossible to deny that those who depart, not to return, must, for themselves and children, for certain diminish the stock of the population of the country which they abandon; and it is not less impossible to dispute, that even on the footing that the place of those emigrants may be filled by others in the progress of ages, still the *immediate* loss to the parent state must be felt. Touching this mat-

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ter, the Noble Lord has chiefly referred to the instance of the Isle of Sky, as illustrative of his position, contending that the multiplication of the people in that island has gradually advanced, in spite of all the drains of emigration. Before, however, his Lordship is in condition to require our acquiescence in this instance, he is bound to tell us (which he has not done) how many people have gone *to* Sky since the period assumed in his calculations. To enumerate the exported, and to draw a veil over the *imports* (who have been numerous in the Isle of Sky,) is not exactly to furnish accurate data. The fact is, Lord Selkirk has for once misapprehended the elemental principles of his own theory, or at least their application. The necessarily progressive increase of the stock, is a first principle both in the animal and the vegetable world; and population must go on, if its progress is not positively stopped. But this affords no argument to prove the necessity of an artificial check, unless it can be demonstrated that the abundance of the population exceeded the opportunities of employment, and the means of support. It is time enough to lop the tree of its branches, when they have begun either to encumber the adjacent ground, or to injure the parent stem. It will be soon enough to banish our luxuriant population, when the defects of our own country are

less



less extensive, and the times in which we live less perilous.

But I have yet a heavier objection to the speculations of the Earl of Selkirk. Asserting that a change has of late years arisen in the very "character" of the Highland peasantry, he has pressed his delusive schemes of emigration as a salutary antidote against the growing spirit "of discontent." A revolution in national character, and that a revolution of discontent, is indeed a serious matter, sufficient to justify almost any prevention, sufficient even to authorise partial extirpation. But as the evil is awful, so it should not be alleged on slight grounds; nor should we forget, that to get rid of one calamity, men have oftentimes rushed into the bosom of a worse. In the present instance, I believe the complaint to be imaginary, and the remedy to be pernicious. The Ross-shire mobs indeed I have heard of, as well as Lord Selkirk. But let it be remembered, that these were mere local and temporary excesses, which firmness in the Gentry would probably have repressed, which the efforts of a single Circuit Court extinguished, and which owed their origin as much to the period when they arose as to the introduction of sheep farming. In 1792, the spirit of revolution pervaded higher ranks than the peasants of Ross-shire. At that time, Sir, if I have not been

been

been misinformed, some men of better information than Ross-shire probably contains, are said to have inconsiderately predicted the fall of our Government, and enthusiastically to have avowed a passion for American emigration. Thanks to God, these sentiments have vanished with the fever which produced them, and the peaceful disposition of the Highland peasantry is now as pure as would be their contentment, if American advisers would let them rest. Were it otherwise, however. Still would I ask, Is banishment the only cure for internal discontent?—I have understood that the blood of the human body may be purified, without being absolutely drawn off, and I should suppose that the dissatisfactions of a people may be removed without the transportation of their persons. Would Lord Selkirk, therefore, but apply the strength of his talents to cure the malady, not the individual, we should applaud his exertions. While his attentions are confined to the removal of the patient, without the removal of the contagion, those who remain owe him but little thanks. The ranks of the infected may be thinned, but the seat of the disease has not been extirpated.

And, here, let me pay a passing tribute of praise to that society whose labours Lord Selkirk, though a member, has disclaimed, but whose zeal, I trust, he

has not extinguished.—Their motives no man can censure ; and as the effect of their labours has undoubtedly been to check, in some, and that not small degree, the phrenzy of emigration, even the objectionable portions of their plans and regulations (if such there really are) might have been pardoned for the good they have promoted. Be this as it may in Lord Selkirk's eyes, we can only profess opposite impressions. Seeing that by their exertions, many families have been saved, at this portentous aera, to their country, and that a dawning spirit of industry has in many places been introduced, we trust the Highland Society will not relax its efforts to preserve an orderly and a valuable people against every necessity, and against every allurements, to emigration.

Could the writer of this letter suppose that his suggestions were requisite either to animate the exertions or to enlarge the information of the Highland Society, with a view to this important object, these should not be withheld. But as he is convinced of the zeal, so is persuaded of the intelligence of this distinguished association. Already do we discover the testimonies of that zeal and intelligence in the success of their measures in behalf of their humble and remote brethren ; and can it be doubted, that a spirit, of which the advantages have already been as remarkable as the  
ardour,

ardour, will continue? On the contrary, we look forward to future exertions, of yet greater extent, and of equal benefit, to the alteration of inexpedient regulations, to the commutation of peculiar and improvident imposts, to the recovery of waste lands, to the extension of valuable fisheries, to the increase of comfortable villages, and to the introduction of infant manufactories. These are the cheering prospects which we delight to contemplate, and which the exertions of the Highland Society, and of individuals of influence, promise yet to realize. And these prospects we can enjoy, although Lord Selkirk could establish to demonstration, that their attainment must operate to the destruction of all his schemes of American colonization.

Nor ought the exertions of Government to be forgotten by a grateful people. It has obtained laws, it has given bounties, and it has furnished employment, by the promotion of great public works, to many who bless their benefactors. It is true, that these works, though extensive, are but temporary. Certainly they never would have been begun, but in the anticipation of a conclusion. Yet limited as their endurance is, they are nevertheless greatly calculated to repress both the spirit and the causes of emigration. They give bread to hundreds at this moment; they must continue

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to furnish encreasing employment for many years to come ; they teach and disseminate a genuine spirit of industry ; and when at last their labours are accomplished, then the country itself must rapidly improve by the facility of access between the most distant parts. These are no visionary consequences ; they are the indispensable results of what we see before us. I cannot therefore commend the man who would chill the munificence of his country, were it nothing else but munificence ; I can still less praise him, who would paralyze a liberality which appears to be not less ultimately beneficial to the giver, than to the receiver.

*AMICUS.*

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## LETTER VII.

*TO THE EDITOR OF THE HERALD AND CHRONICLE.*

SIR,

To overcome the motives which have hitherto led the emigrant Highlanders to settle in the territory of the

the United States of America, Lord Selkirk recommends, that "some pretty strong inducement should be held out to the first party who will settle in other situations offered to them;" and it was not to be doubted that his Lordship's doctrine should thus accord with the example which he has furnished.—It is strange, however, that the same man who would in this way bribe the emigrant to turn in his course, should cast a cold and repulsive eye on every suggestion calculated to divert him from that course entirely. To advise the application of inducements in order to guide the destination of the wanderer, and to reject every persuasive for avoiding the radical evil, is not of apparent wisdom.

Had his Lordship's scheme of *inducements* been long and unsuccessfully tried with a view to the prevention of emigration altogether, then the propriety of a measure calculated to alleviate that which would not cure, must have been undeniable. But it is time enough to resort to palliatives, when the antidote is proved to be vain; and we have not yet seen sufficient evidence of the failure of the latter. We know that it is long since the mere gossip's tale of "happy regions, and fortunate islands," has lost its efficacy in the Highlands. The decay of the ancient system of insular subordination, may, for a time, indeed have raised

raised an epidemic desire of wandering; but that fever has cooled, and the emissaries of emigration are obliged to use enticements. In truth, the Scottish emigration was never that capricious movement, which in former times prevailed among those regions of the North, from whence the irruptions issued which subverted the power of Rome, where the state of life was always unsettled, and where colonization was systematical. In Scotland, it has been the immediate result of a peculiar cause, and is susceptible, of course, of a peculiar corrective.

To what degree the mischiefs of emigration, if uncorrected, may advance, we venture not to foretel. Our object is only to shew that the system itself is corrupt. It tends to the removal of subjects whom the State requires; and it tends not to the probable happiness of the people themselves. The first of these facts is beyond all dispute, for emigration without removal is a solicism and an absurdity; and the importance of preventing this removal can only be denied when the claims of the state, and the demands of improvers, are universally answered. The second fact is no less within the assurance of every man who will condescend to inquire before he pronounces. Happiness, Sir, does often follow in the paths of emigration. Of the numbers who have travelled to the

new

new world within these 50 years, it will be found, on investigation, that the greater part has fallen early under disappointment and distress. Their dreams of felicity have terminated in penury and toil; and to the evils of indigence have been superadded the horrors of perpetual banishment.

I have learned from a gentleman of great respectability, who has resided long in America, and in a situation affording peculiar means of information, that his surprise at the statements in Lord Selkirk's book regarding the prospects and possibilities which await the emigrants, exceeds all example; that he knows that of the whole mass of those who have heretofore emigrated, not one in ten has survived, above a few years, the calamities of his fate; and that of those few, the descendants have hardly in any one instance reached to the third generation. Again, in respect to the labours which even those, whose constitutional powers can best withstand the pressure of the ordinary hardships of a new life, must encounter, I am warranted by the same authority to deny the physical possibility of the Noble Lord's calculations; to assert that the most able negro on the whole continent of America would sink under the work Lord Selkirk has assigned for each of his Highlanders; and to require of Lord Selkirk, if he shall hereafter persist in his statements,

that



that he shall support them by some authority of unquestionable experience.

On this subject, Sir, I repeat that enquiry is within the reach of us all ; and those who take the trouble to enquire may soon learn to estimate the accuracy of Lord Selkirk's deductions.

Very probably those who originally went, at the commencement of this mania, were such as could be spared in the immediate circumstances of the country ; and it is not less probable, that the delusion of the benefits of their departure were long kept up by those more wary adventurers, who, having obtained grants of American land, were disposed to invite settlers from all quarters. But this does not obviate the objections to modern emigration. Lord Selkirk, indeed, constantly repeats, that the people will go at all events, and it is on this foundation, that he so plausibly argues for his plan of temptations. He would rather make them a sort of Anglo-Americans than total Americans, and perhaps there may be something in the scheme. But what I maintain is, that it has not yet been ascertained, that these people will migrate at all hazards. So far as the trial has been made, many who thought of going, have been prevailed on to abandon their resolution ; a fact to which Lord Selkirk himself bears witness. Why not therefore pursue

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These measures of retention? The worst possible servant to any state, is an emigrant subject. A pensioned Hessian is better than an ejected citizen. For if the former has no attachment to inspire him, he has at least the recollection of no sorrows to cool him.

Lord Selkirk has also been desirous to impress the idea, that none but men of the class of *farmers* are disposed to emigrate, in order, doubtless, to enable him to argue, that with such men no supply of the means of labour, nor any temptation, but land, would operate as a restraint. In this, however, there is a twofold mistake. The farmers are not the only emigrants, although, when men of that class do move, they form the most distinguished part of the cargo, from the comparative eminence of their *status*, as well as from the stock which they possess. In the second place, it is erroneous to suppose, that even this description of persons cannot be provided for at home with at least as much facility as the cottagers. They are the very persons whom the waste lands of Britain would suit; the very men whose little capitals, and whose natural energies, their country might, by judicious arrangements, best turn to its own good. But these men, it seems, from the code of the Earl of Selkirk, are nevertheless to be consigned to expend

the vigour of their minds in a state of banishment, and the fruits of their former industry in the desperate speculations of blind experiment.

We are told, moreover, that if we so change the usual 'destination' of the emigrants as to get them conducted exclusively to our own colonies, they will constitute a bulwark of future strength to the parent State. Even were this a certain fact, instead of a speculative idea, it does not obviate the question, Why we should let them go at all? Or why allure men by any means to leave us, when the business of the nation requires them at home. It is in vain to denominate these people the "overflowings of our population." That land can hardly be said to overflow with people, in which there are thousands of desolate and unemployed wastes, and for which the various artificial establishments call unceasingly for supplies.

And let it be remembered, that all this warmth of attachment which our colonies are to foster, is yet to be discovered. The history of mankind does not furnish very favourable testimonies of the zeal or constancy of colonial affection, even in the case of original, voluntary, and gregarious separation. In general, the spirit of independence has overset the affections of kindred, and even the feelings of gratitude; and I may put it to the recollection of your readers, whether, since the  
 world

world began, a colony has ever declined to shew, that it could do without the mother country, if its circumstances enabled it to display an independence. Besides, it is, to ordinary minds, a strange thing to imagine, that the medium of transplantation should improve the native force of Britain, for British service. Moderate conceptions should rather conjecture, that if the depopulation of the mother country shall ever arrive at that pitch when our armies must be recruited from Prince Edward's Island, we need care but little whether we recruit at all. The original emigrants must then be off the stage of life; and their posterity will, in all likelihood, be as ready to hearken to the seductions of other powers, as to the invitations of the country which cast out their fathers.—The French, who detest us on system, are always busy with our colonists; and the Americans, who hate us in revenge, are no less alert in their own neighbourhood. It seems doubtful, therefore, whether there is any wisdom in retaining so many colonies as we already possess; to encourage more were surely unwise. We could even better understand the policy of persuading refugees to settle on the naked shores of Scotland, than the plan of aiding Scotchmen to colonize the shores of Labrador, or the Hudsons.

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The “ pretty strong inducement ” which Lord Selkirk advises, is to manage emigration so, that it shall move, not by detachments, but *en masse*—wholesale emigration. This at least is honest. So fervid is the spirit of this Noble (and assuredly this excellent) enthusiast, that nothing short of extirpation will serve his purpose. “ If means could be found (says the Noble Earl) of *influencing a considerable body of people*, connected by the ties of blood and friendship, they may have less aversion to try a new situation ; and if such a settlement be once conducted safely through its first difficulties, till the adventurers feel a confidence in their resources, and acquire some attachment to the country, the object may be considered as almost entirely accomplished.”—These, Sir, are the very words of Lord Selkirk. Get but a *body of people* to move, “ and no peculiar *encouragement* will be any longer necessary.” I cannot but lament to hear such sentiments from the lips of an hereditary pillar of the State under which he was born ; they besit not the natural protector of a whole people. ’Tis true, they are limited to the expression “ destination.” But wherefore should even the branches of a mischievous policy be encouraged ?—Why not root out the system entirely ?—If it is bad in the abstract, and

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we think no unprejudiced man can deny its abstract evil tendency, is it not better to attack emigration in its vitals at once, than merely to soften its worst corruptions?—Finally, if this phrenzy is created by the peculiar condition of the country at the moment, why not rather struggle to amend the adverse circumstances of the times, than to accelerate the means of their continued operation?

Men may be persuaded from, as well as to, a peculiar line of conduct. Lord Selkirk proves, from the case of the Georgia settlers in 1772, that the original recruiting of emigrants was but up-hill work; and he also proves, from his own labours in this vineyard of emigration, that to divert the dejected wanderer in his course is, even now, not a bit more easy. Earnestly, therefore, would we recommend it to this Noble Person to try his fortune in a new course; and since these people are so reluctant to move, at least in the “RIGHT” path, to attempt the means of their employment in their native land. That there are various means of such employment, the wisdom of Government has already shewn; and that these sources are not yet exhausted, genius far inferior to Lord Selkirk’s could easily unfold.

*AMICUS.*

LETTER

## LETTER VIII.

*TO THE EDITOR OF THE HERALD AND CHRONICLE.*

SIR,

THE concluding section of Lord Selkirk's book is calculated, I acknowledge, to warm the imaginations and interest the hearts of almost every class of readers. We are awakened to the fate of 800 human beings, enlisted to relinquish their native country, enticed to seek for happiness in a land which they know not, to traverse the forest and the desert "with the helplessness of infancy," to encounter, through the dateless limits of their exile, every peril which the utmost difficulties of nature can present, and every disappointment which the failure of delusive expectations can occasion. In this history of Lord Selkirk's Practical Essay on the Advantages of Emigration, we necessarily participate in the feelings which have animated the pen of the describer. To so curious a picture of experimental humanity, every one is attracted. The  
philosopher

philosopher sees the application of a new theory ; the traveller is introduced into an unknown tract ; and even the novelist, in a story almost romantic, dreams of the visions of a Fairy-land. But all this, notwithstanding, I would advise the public to pause ere they finally approve, and I would beseech the Noble Author to hesitate before he ships off his next cargo of fellow citizens, even to the happy shores of St Lawrence. Let him consider only, that every man who is induced, by his persuasion, to leave his native home, is a subject, all but lost to his Sovereign ; and let him also remember, that of every such man, who so goes, and repents him, the future misery lies on the head of the Earl of Selkirk.—I have no pleasure in urging these eventual accusations, against so eminent and so worthy a man ; but, in accuracy, I am bound with both to charge him. The information of his own pamphlet demonstrates that, of his *first* exportation, many went out reluctant ; and the least acquaintance with human nature must teach, that even of those who embarked cheerfully, a proportion at least are, ere now, sorrowful.

“ What strong mysterious links enchain the heart  
To regions where our youthful seasons passed ;  
In foreign land, tho’ happier be the clime,

Tho’



Tho' round our board smile all the friends we love,  
The face of Nature wears a stranger's look."—

—" What though the cluster'd vine there hardly tempts  
The traveller's hand ; tho' birds of dazzling plume  
Perch on the loaded boughs — " Give me,"

(Exclaims the banish'd man) " thy barren woods,

" Poor Scotland !" —

Sir, the feeling which is here displayed is universal. The painting is indeed the Poet's, but its justice and application are not fictitious.

Admitting therefore to the full, the seductive powers of Lord Selkirk's description of his infant colony, we would have him cautiously to enquire, whether even already the " blaze of the woodfire," or his Lordship's own more cheering smiles, are not become inadequate to quash the busy labours of memory, and the recollection of happier days, among his western tenantry ; whether even by this time, every stroke of the ax, is not re-echoed, by a throb from the heart, at the remembrance of the impenetrable barriers which separate these " voluntary" exiles from the spot where they had often wished to go down to the dust. If our suspicions are just (and they are not entirely founded on imagination) we may be permitted to intreat of his Lordship next to try the plan of a *domestic* settlement for the occupation of the  
overflowings

overflowings of his Hebrédian countrymen. Should he himself have no spare corner within the bounds of his paternal domains, we will aid him in the discovery of abundant and ready situations, where, if there are no proper materials for the log-house and the wigwam, there is at least a soil accommodated to the experience, and a climate fitted to the constitutions of the people; where, if the luxuriance of the prospect, and the productive powers of the land are inferior, the profits of the labourer are at least sure, and the gale which blows around him, *blows without a pestilence*.

To trace the effusions of genius is always a delightful task. He must be a fastidious mortal who can refuse to admire execution, even where his heart and conviction disapprove the design. But the mere display of abilities, however captivating, ought not on the other hand to extenuate, since it can never atone for their perversion.

To see Lord Selkirk active in measures which must of necessity tend to rob his country of her peasantry, may please the fancy of those whom the fascinations of his writing, and the admiration of his zeal have captivated; but it is to be hoped that the more sober of his countrymen, may, on reflection, regret that this same ardour had not been monopolised in the creation

of villages and manufactories in the country which gave him birth, where his example would have been regarded with veneration, and his opinions referred to as a law,

I have now, Sir, taken the liberty to suggest, in the course of our short correspondence, the doubts which I entertain of the leading principles on which Lord Selkirk has founded his popular and attractive volume. Had it been my purpose to answer that production, paragraph by paragraph, I should certainly not have been deterred by any apprehension that those parts of it which I have passed unnoticed are of more difficult refutation than those to which I have ventured to object. But far different avocations, and circumstances of little importance to your readers, have prevented any attempt on my part to write a book. Believing, however, from my heart, in the dangerous tendency of a work which every man was reading, and many men (I admit) applauding, I have not hesitated to attempt to arrest this extensive spirit of commendation, even by the medium of a few detached paragraphs in a newspaper; in the hope that even these suggestions may excite more perfect investigations; and in the confidence that the concealment I have adopted may at least prove that I have been actuated

uated by no impulse but attachment to the welfare  
of my country—

\* O Caledonia, stern and wild !”—

—“ Land of brown heath and shaggy wood,  
Land of the mountain and the flood,  
Land of my Sires !—what mortal hand  
Can ere untie the filial band  
That knits me to the rugged strand !”

I am, Sir,

Your obedient servant,

*AMICUS.*

FINIS.

ALEX. SMELLIE, Printer,  
Edinburgh.